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Title: **A non-movement analysis of Nepali correlatives**

Date: Friday, April 7, 2006
Time: 12:00pm
Place: Linguistics Seminar Room (201), 370 Temple Street

Abstract:

Relativization is often assumed to be a unitary structural phenomenon across languages, with all patterns ultimately derivable from a common structure or involving identical syntactic mechanisms at some level of representation. In this talk I will discuss facts from Nepali correlatives that challenge the specific assumption that a relative clause and the matrix-clause nominal element it modifies must always form a syntactic constituent.

Analyses of correlatives in South Asian languages have recognized two basic (necessary and underlying) positions for relative clauses (i.e. DP-adjoined and IP-adjoined), in order to accommodate the existence of both embedded single relatives and sentence-initial multiple relatives. The more common correlative pattern - that of a single sentence-initial relative (as in the example below) - occurs in all languages with correlatives and is easily generated under both approaches.

Jun keTi-lai Ram-le dekh-yo, tyo keTi-lai ma cin chu
REL girl-DAT Ram-ERG see-PST DEM girl-DAT 1SG.NOM know-1SG.PR
'Which girl Ram saw, I know her' = 'I know the girl who Ram saw'

The two possible positions are generally assumed to be derivationally related, and often semantically and pragmatically equivalent as well, assumptions that are well-motivated in languages like Hindi.

Against this background, several related issues for Nepali correlatives will be addressed in the talk:

- The sentence-initial position is obligatory in certain contexts.
- Even when both positions are available, they do not share all interpretations or felicity conditions, which I propose is related to the "anchoring" function of the correlative.
- There is a lack of expected syntactic evidence for movement in correlative constructions. Such questions will be discussed in terms of coreference and binding across islands, variation in reconstruction effects, and patterns of anaphor binding.
- Sentence-initial relative clauses display both topic-maintaining and topic-introducing functions of "left-dislocated" elements, in contrast to other relativization patterns in Nepali.

These issues will be discussed in detail for Nepali and placed in comparative Indo-Aryan context. While correlative constructions in Nepali may involve one of two distinct adjunction sites, I will argue that nothing is gained by analyzing these positions as related by movement, and that it would actually obscure important facts about Nepali that distinguish its relativization facts from similar patterns related languages.